

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1390

AMEMBASSY LISBON

INFO AMCONSUL OPORTO

CINCEUR

COMUSOFRAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0044

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TAGS: PINT, PO

SUB: THE FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE AZORES

SUMMARY: FLA FAVORS INDEPENDENCE FOR THE AZORES, BUT MOST FLA LEADERS

TODAY WOULD SETTLE FOR AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY. IT PROBABLY HAS THE LAT
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SUPPORT OF OVER 70 PERCENT OF POPULATION. ALTHOUGH LEADERSHIP IN
FURTHERING AZOREAN INTERESTS HAS SHIFTED FROM FLA, AS
AN ORGANIZATION, TO THE REGIONAL JUNTA,
FLA HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE EXTREMELY USEFUL TO THE AZORES.

NOTE: THIS IS NOT A DEFINITIVE REPORT ON FLA, BUT AN ATTEMPT TO PIECE

TOGETHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE CONSULATE. SINCE IT IS A
CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION, EVEN THE BEST CONTACTS AND FRIENDS OF THE
CCONSULATE ARE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS FLA IN ANYTHING BUT THE MOST
GENERAL TERMS. WHEN SPECIFIC, THESE CONTACTS RARELY GO BEYOND MENTIO
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OF THEIR OWN INVOLVEMENT AND VIEWS. PLEASE PROTECT ALL NAMES MENTIONE
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1. THE FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE AZORES, FLA, IS A CLANDESTINE MOVEMENT SEEKING INDEPENDENCE OF THE AZORES. ALTHOUGH SUPPORT FOR AZOREAN INDEPENDENCE FIRST APPEARED IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY,

FLA MADE ITS DEBUT IN APRIL 1975 ON SAO MIGUEL AND GREW AND SPREAD TO OTHER ISLANDS

DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS PROPELLED BY THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST DOMINATION OF PORTUGAL. THERE ARE THREE BASIC FACTORS BEHIND FLA:

1) ECONOMIC, EXPLOITATION OF THE AZORES BY THE CONTINENT AND FEAR THAT

CURRENT PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL ENGULF THE AZORES; 2)

ANTI-COMMUNISM AND 3) "AZOREANISM", A REJECTION OF A PERCEIVED

SECOND CLASS PORTUGUESE STATUS, AND NEW FOUND

PRIDE IN BEING AZOREAN. ALTHOUGH

ANTI-COMMUNISM WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RAPID GROWTH OF FLA, TODAY THE

PRIMARY REASON FOR FLA'S CONTINUED STRENGTH IS THE FEAR THE AZORES WILL

SUFFER MORE THAN IT HAS TO DATE FROM THE ECONOMIC

CRISIS ON THE CONTINENT.

2. AIMS: FLA FAVORS INDEPENDENCE OF THE AZORES. TODAY, HOWEVER MOST FLA

LEADERS,

REALIZING THE CURRENT LACK OF GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES AND THE

VALUE

OF THE PROTECTED PORTUGUESE MARKET FOR THE PRIMARY AZOREAN

EXPORTS (MEATS AND MILK) WOULD SETTLE FOR AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY

WHICH LEAVES OPEN THE OPTION OF INDEPENDENCE IN TWO TO FIVE YEARS

OR IN EVENT OF AN EXTREME PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT OR LEFT.

IT IS NOT CLEAR, HOWEVER, HOW MUCH THE FLA RANK AND FILE UNDERSTAND

THE VALUES OF AUTONOMY. WE BELIEVE THERE IS STILL A CONSIDERABLE SENT

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IMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO INDEPENDENCE AMONG AZOREAN.

FLA ALSO ADVOCATES A REFERENDUM ON THE STATUS OF THE AZORES.

3. SOURCE OF SUPPORT: FLA SUPPORTERS REPRESENT THE ENTIRE AZOREAN

POLITICAL SPECTRUM FROM THE FAR RIGHT THROUGH THE SOCIALISTS AND

ACCORDING TO SOME RUMORS, TO THE FAR LEFT. FLA OVERLAPS

WITH THE CDS AND PPD, BUT THE PPD DOMINATES AND

CONTRIBUTED ITS SOCIAL

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DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION TO FLA'S PUBLISHED PRINCIPLES.

FLA PERMEATES AZOREAN SOCIETY AND IT CAN PROBABLY

COUNT ON THE LATENT SUPPORT

OF OVER 70 PERCENT OF

THE POPULATION. THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE FLA WORKERS, HOWEVER, MAY NOT

EXCEED FEW HUNDRED. ALTHOUGH FLA SUPPORTERS ARE FOUND IN ALL

WALKS OF LIFE IT IS PARTICULARLY STRONG AMONG THE FARMERS.

4. ORGANIZATION: IN MANY RESPECTS FLA IS A WAY OF THINKING RATHER THAN AN ORGANIZATION. ALTHOUGH IT HAS SHOWN THE ABILITY TO MOBILIZE LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE FOR DEMONSTRATIONS ON SHORT NOTICE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS A DISCIPLINED GROUP. THERE IS NO ONE SUPREME LEADER NOR A READILY IDENTIFIABLE COMMITTEE OF LEADERS, BUT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MEN FROM DIFFERENT FACTIONS AND ISLANDS, WHO ARE IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER. THERE ARE TWO WELL DEFINED FACTIONS WITHIN FLA, THE MODERATE, SO CALLED PPD FLA AND THE RIGHT WING FLA BASED ON SAO MIGUEL WHICH IS OFTEN IDENTIFIED WITH THE CDS.

5. RIGHT WING FLA: THE RIGHT FLA IS IDENTIFIED IN MOST MINDS WITH THE CDS AND WITH MONEYED INTERESTS IN SAO MIGUEL. IT FAVORS IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE SATISFIED WITH A VERY EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY. MANY WHO DO NOT AGREE WITH IT RECOGNIZE ITS VALUE AS A SOURCE OF PRESSURE ON THE GOP. ONE RELIABLE SOURCE CLAIMS THE RIGHT WING OF FLA CAN BE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS; THE CONSERVATIVE CDS GROUP, THE ORIGINAL FLA ORGANIZERS AND THE MORE MODERATE GROUP WHICH LINKS THE MODERATE AND THE RIGHT WING OF FLA. MANY CONSIDER THE CDS GROUP LED BY THE CDS PRESIDENT (CONSULATE LAWYER) ABEL CARRIERO, TO BE INTERESTED ONLY IN PRESERVING ITS OWN WEALTH AND PRIVILEGES. THE ORIGINAL FLA GROUP IS MADE UP OF MERCHANTS AND FARMERS SAID TO BE IDEALISTS WHO FAVOR SOME CHANGE IN AZOREAN SOCIETY. THE THIRD GROUP IS HEADED BY JOSE FRANCO, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FLA MEMBERS, AND A PART-TIME VOLUNTARY WORKER FOR THE REGIONAL JUNTA, WHO REPORTEDLY NOW IS WILLING

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TO ACCEPT EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IT IS THROUGH JOSE FRANCO AND HIS ASSOCIATES THAT THE MODERATE OR PPD FLA HAS SOME INFLUENCE ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE RIGHT WING. THE RIGHT WING HAS ARMED SUPPORTERS WHO ENGAGE IN PARAMILITARY TRAINING, ALTHOUGH IT HAS THE CAPABILITY FOR VIOLENCE, THERE IS NO CONFIRMED EVIDENCE THAT IT HAS EVER USED IT. THE RIGHT WING FLA HAS SOME SUPPORT OF TERCIERA, BUT IN SPITE OF SOME SUPPORT FOR IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE ON THE OTHER ISLANDS, PARTICULARLY FAIAL, THE FEAR OF BEING MANIPULATED BY WEALTHY, CONSERVATIVE MIGUELENSE INHIBITS ITS SPREAD.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 44

IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS THE RIGHT WING FLA HAS BEEN HOLDING MEETINGS IN THE VILLAGES ALL OVER SAO MIGUEL AND REPORTEDLY TODAY IS AS STRONG OR STRONGER THAN IT EVER HAS BEEN. IT IS QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER HOW MUCH POWER THIS GROUP HAS IF IT WERE OPPOSED BY THE PPD AND THE REGIONAL JUNTA.

6. MODERATE FLA: THE MODERATE FLA IS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE PPD IN THE AZORES. TODAY IT FAVORS AN EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY NOW AND POSSIBLE INDEPENDENCE IN TWO TO FIVE YEARS. IN THE PONTA DELGADA DISTRICT THE PPD AND MODERATE FLA LEADERSHIP IS IDENTICAL AND FLA DRAWS MANY OF ITS SUPPORTERS FROM THE PPD RANK AND FILE. THE PPD DEPUTIES, JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL AND AMERICO NATALINO VIREROS ARE CONSIDERED MODERATE FLA LEADERS. IN ADDITION THE TWO JUNTA MEMBERS FROM PONTA DELGADA, DR. JACOME CORREIA, AN INDEPENDENT, AND DR. HENRIQUE AGUIAR RODRIGUES, PPD BOTH HAVE CLOSE FLA TIES. IN THE ANGRA DISTRICT, THE PPD POLITICAL COMMITTEE IS NOT FLA, BUT REALISES THAT THE PARTY RANK AND FILE ARE, AND KEEPS IN TOUCH WITH FLA LEADERS. ONE OF THE PPD FOUNDERS IN ANGRA, DR. CUNHA DE OLIVERIA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE JUNTA GERAL AND HEAD OF THE NEW PLANNING UNIT FOR THE AZORES, IS A PROMINENT FLA LEADER AND ONE OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STRONG PPD INFLUENCE IN THE FLA PROGRAM.

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IN TERCIERA THE PPD LEADERS WHO BECOME FLA LEADERS HAVE GRADUALLY LOST THEIR LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL PPD STRUCTURE, BUT RETAIN THEIR PPD IDENTIFICATION. IN THE HORTA DISTRICT THE PPD AND FLA ARE INTERTWINED. ONE OF THE KEY FLA ORGANIZERS THERE, JOSE PACHECO DE ALMEIDA, MEMBER OF THE REGIONAL JUNTA, WAS MEMBER OF THE PPD'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE. RECENTLY ONE PPD MEMBER FROM HORTA SAID FIVE OUT OF SIX MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE ARE FLA MILITANTS AND THE SIXTH IS NEUTRAL. THE POLICE CHIEF AND ALL THE MEN, EXCEPT THE COMMANDER, OF THE COASTAL ARTILLERY UNIT ARE REPORTEDLY FLA SUPPORTERS.

7. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

THE U.S. BASED AZOREAN COMMITTEE 75 AND THE LISBON BASED ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AZORES (APDIA) COULD BE CONSIDERED FLA AND BOTH MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH FLA IN THE AZORES. HOWEVER, NEITHER IS COMPLETED TRUSTED BY THE AZOREAN FLA. APDIA IS MADE UP OF PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESSMEN FROM THE AZORES LIVING IN LISBON WHOSE GENERAL POLITICAL ORIENTATION IS NOT CLEAR.

8. FLA AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS: FLA'S ENEMIES CLAIM THE AZOREAN PRESS IS DOMINATED BY FLA. IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE NEWSPAPERS DO SUPPORT THE MODERATE FLA, BUT NOT OPENLY. THE CHURCH IS ALSO SAID TO BE PRO-FLA, PARTICULARLY THE PRIESTS IN THE VILLAGES. THE HIGHLY RESPECTED DR. CUNHA DE OLIVERIA, A SELF CONFESSED FLA LEADER, IS A PRIEST. FLA, NO DOUBT, HAS SOME SUPPORT AMONG THE ARMY TROOPS, WHO ARE AZOREAN, AND IT MAY HAVE A LITTLE SUPPORT AMONG THE SARGEANTS, (75 PERCENT AZOREAN) AND HALF THE AZOREAN OFFICER CORPS.

9. FUTURE: ALTHOUGH LEADERSHIP IN FURTHERING AZOREAN INTERESTS HAS SHIFTED FROM FLA AS AN ORGANIZATION TO THE REGIONAL JUNTA, FLA HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE EXTREMELY USEFUL TO THE AZORES. IT APPLIED THE PRESSURE WHICH FORCED THE GOP TO ESTABLISH THE REGIONAL JUNTA AND TO GRANT IT MINISTERIAL POWERS. NO AZOREAN BELIEVES THE GOP WILL PERMIT EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY OF CONCEED ANYTHING IN THE FUTURE IF FLA DID NOT EXIST. IN ADDITION, EVEN WITH A SUCCESSFUL AUTONOMY THE SENTIMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE WILL DIE SLOWLY. FLA WILL BE AROUND FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. PFIEFLE

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